

Mr. Robert E. Matteson

February 26, 1957

W. A. Tidwell

Informal View on the Current Soviet Position on Disarmament

There is attached a Staff Memorandum prepared by a member of the Office of National Estimates of CIA giving his views of the current Soviet position on disarmament. This is not a coordinated paper and represents nothing more than the views of one well-informed intelligence analyst. I feel, however, that it is worth considering as a background paper on the subject.

Attachment:

Staff Memorandum No. 10-57
as stated.

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Comments on "Reconciliation of Positions"

I have two general comments that pertain to a number of points set out on the sheets.

One, in those proposals related to the budget questions, I think that we should ask for a clarification of the role that prices in various countries will have since the countries involved have radically different price structures and economic controls. For example, a country might double its armament purchases over time by following a deflationary policy while another country might halve its armaments acquisitions by following an inflationary policy.

With regard to the points concerning force levels, I think we would be well advised to agree on what constitutes armed forces since the Soviet Union has at least two organizations of uncertain status. These are the troops of the MVD who are uniformed, armed and organized in a military fashion and the DOSAAF which performs a great many support functions in training personnel for military and civil defense purposes.

EXSEC (Not for Log)

WATidwell:cpc

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Intelligence concerning possible Soviet attitude in forthcoming discussions

You will recall that last week Mr. Donkin brought to the Governor's attention a National Intelligence Estimate reviewing the world situation (NIE 100-3-57). This NIE indicated that there was considerable fluidity in the current world situation and that there were factors which might lead one to believe that the Soviet Union might take some concrete steps of a more realistic nature than they have sometimes undertaken in the past. I personally agree with Mr. Donkin that this is a most thought provoking estimate and that the factors discussed may have a considerable influence on the Soviet position in London.

I am forwarding with this memorandum, however, a copy of draft of NIE 12-57 entitled "Stability of the Soviet Satellite Structure". The final approved estimate is probably out by now but this draft is the latest version that I could get my hands on. I would like to call your attention particularly to paragraph B of the Conclusions and paragraphs 5, 21 and 22 of the Discussion. This estimate envisages no possibility of a general political or military withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Europe even in return for a withdrawal of U.S. forces. The estimate envisages a rigid Soviet attitude rather different from that implied in the earlier estimate mentioned above. I was struck by this seeming inconsistency.

I think that it would probably be advisable for Governor Stassen to be acquainted with the satellite estimate and the diverse implications in the two estimates.

It seems to me that there are three general interpretations of the Soviet attitude that we might expect. Unfortunately at this juncture there is no way of knowing for sure which is likely to be the correct one. They might be stated as follows:

1) All Soviet proposals are designed for propaganda effect and are completely cynical.

2) Domestic problems in the Soviet Union are so severe and Soviet foreign policy has received such setbacks recently that the Russians are genuinely interested in reducing their commitments provided they drive a sufficiently hard bargain to leave them feeling relatively secure.

3) There exist in the Soviet Government two or more schools of thought embodying the above positions and that the proponents of each school of thought rise or decrease in influence in accordance with external events and/or the degree to which the respective policies advocated achieve concrete results.

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If one were to accept this categorization of possible interpretations for the sake of argument, one could almost say that the satellite estimate subscribes to the first view and the estimate of the world situation to the second. I think, however, that we should not overlook the third possibility. For example, I have been struck by a small matter which could actually reflect such a situation. You probably recall that when President Eisenhower proposed the open skies policy at Geneva, his Russian counterparts were horrified because such a scheme would "put both our countries in the hands of the intelligence people". Upon looking into the Russian organization for the conduct of aerial photography, I find that there are two major organizations involved. One of these is the Military Topographical Department of the Ministry of Defense which is a relatively small organization. It almost appears that the Russian military has traditionally used aerial photography for front line tactical situations and not for long-range strategic intelligence. On the other hand, the second organization, the Chief Directorate of Cartography and Geodesy of the Ministry of Interior (MVD) has a large aerial photographic capability which has been used extensively for mapping and for the planning of natural resource development. The U.S. Air Force intelligence technicians say that the equipment and techniques used by the MVD in aerial photography are quite good.

It is interesting to note that the February 1 TASS statement on disarmament, when it referred to the proposal for using aerial photography in Europe, used the words "within the area of disposition in Europe of the principal armed forces of the North Atlantic Bloc and the Warsaw Treaty Powers". This is the kind of language that one might expect if there were a question of jurisdiction between the MVD and the Soviet Ministry of Defense. In other words, the military might retain jurisdiction for aerial photography in an area that could be defined as a purely military area but the MVD might be involved if the area included the interior of the Soviet Union or involved using aerial photography in areas and against the targets requiring analytical techniques developed by the MVD. Could it be possible that we have in the November 17 proposals a set of proposals acceptable to one group in the Soviet government and deliberately constructed to avoid involving another group in the Soviet government opposed to such a course of action? If this were the case, it would create complications for the American scheme of progressive application of inspection and controls since Russian cooperation in one area of jurisdiction might be radically different from Russian cooperation in another. On the other hand, successful implementation of controls agreeable to one group might strengthen the position of that group inside the Soviet Union so as to make possible more comprehensive agreements in the future.

Attachment:

As stated.

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